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SUBJECT: U.S. SPONSORED MEDIA TRAINING ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED,
COMBATS NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES

This cable is a program evaluation of FY 2008 U.S. Speaker Stephen Coon, program tracker No. 30388

1A. Name of Speaker: Professor Stephen C. Coon, International Communications Consultant and Emeritus Associate Professor of the Greenlee School of Journalism, Iowa State University

1B. Dates of Program: Monday, November 5 through Friday, November 9

1C. MSP Themes Addressed: Goal #1: Mutual U.S./Suriname appreciation and respect contributing to a more effective partnership. Goal #2: Strong democratic and judicial institutions, supported by effective law enforcement.

1D. SUMMARY: Professor Stephen C. Coon conducted four days of media training on editing and critical journalistic thinking in Suriname's two largest cities, reaching thirteen separate media outlets as well as government Public Affairs Officers. The journalists, whose formal training is often nil, received the training enthusiastically. The training helped counteract negative stereotypes about U.S. influence on the media, while promoting U.S. goals of strengthened democratic institutions. The two-day workshops covered the production and editing of visuals and sounds and identifying relevant pictures, and focused on technical aspects of news gathering and editing, but were also grounded in the theme of a free press in a democratic society.

1E. Audience reached and size: Coon provided journalists from thirteen separate media outlets as well as government Public Affairs Officers skills in news editing. Coon, who came to Suriname for the third time, conducted training in Nieuw Nickerie in which 21 local journalists participated. Outreach to Nieuw Nickerie has been an important aspect of Post attempts to reach a diversified audience in 2006 and 2007. In Paramaribo 22 journalists participated in a two-day workshop. The Paramaribo workshop confirmed a long-standing mutual relationship with the local press, which is in need of and desires additional training. At the end of both workshops the participants received certificates of appreciation from the U.S. Embassy in Paramaribo.

1F. Effectiveness of the speaker in communicating intended messages to target audiences: Coon's presence in Suriname received extensive media attention. The opening and closing of the Nickerie workshop appeared on all three local TV stations. All three stations also broadcast separate interviews with Mr. Coon and Embassy officials. The opening of the Paramaribo workshop was covered by three TV stations: STVS, RBN, and Apintie, and Radio 10. Coon's visit was greeted with enthusiasm by participants. Spots were filled quickly, and one of the TV stations in Nieuw Nickerie even brought in their nightly newscast video to request a personal critique from Coon. Coon's workshops supported one of the U.S Government's most

important goals, namely supporting the strengthening of democracy in Suriname.

G. Type and Quality of IIP support: Post appreciated IIP's efforts to help make this program work despite the quick turnaround. IIP's flexibility and understanding was essential to making the program a success.

H. Impact: Combating negative stereotypes with the media is more important than ever. During the Nieuw Nickerie training, EmbOffs had a separate lunch with prominent local politician and former candidate for President of Suriname Mohamed Doekhie. Doekhie told EmbOffs, "this evening I'm going to get together with some of those journalists, and tell them that this training is really about telling them what to say so that it's not against the United States." The training, with its focus on critical thinking, was directly in contrast to Doekhie's assertions, and gives journalists tools with which to answer Doekhie on the basis of analysis and experience, rather than stereotypes and emotion. (For additional details on impact, see item F.)

GENTON